



Opening Statement of Rep. Virginia Foxx (R-NC), Chairwoman

Committee on Education and Workforce Markup:

“H. Res. 461, Condemning the use of elementary and secondary school facilities to provide shelter for aliens who are not admitted to the United States;

H.R.1147, Whole Milk for Healthy Kids Act of 2023;

H.R.2813, Self-Insurance Protection Act; and

H.R.2868, Association Health Plans Act”

June 6, 2023

(As prepared for delivery)

The Committee is meeting today for consideration of four bills that improve student outcomes and health care options for small businesses.

The first two bills being considered today are H. Res. 461, a resolution condemning the use of public elementary and secondary school facilities to provide shelter for aliens who are not admitted to the United States and H.R. 1147, the *Whole Milk for Healthy Kids Act*, legislation that ensures students have the necessary nutrients to learn and grow.

Both bills, in their own way, protect our posterity by ensuring the safety, security, and health of our nation’s children.

H. Res. 461 addresses concerns that Democrats are compromising the welfare of our school children by inviting illegal immigrants into our public school gymnasiums.

In New York, Mayor Eric Adams has opened the doors of current and former public schools to asylum seekers. Immigrants are flooding across our porous border already, to the tune of 10,000 aliens a day in the last month. We don’t need more state-backed incentives for them to migrate to America on the taxpayers’ dime.

The safety and education of our school children should be paramount. This Democrat public facility asylum policy is unsafe and anti-education.

Passing H. Res. 461 sends a full-throated message to New York City, the Biden administration, and local leaders across the country that the safety and education of American school children should not be subject to their pro-illegal immigration whims.

The *Whole Milk for Healthy Kids Act* empowers food service providers and parents to make choices regarding the health and well-being of our school children. Under current Obama-era restrictions, milk choices are limited to fat-free and low-fat options in our nation's schools.

The Biden administration threatens to further limit milk options, despite the expert opinion of nutritionists and the science of the president's own USDA. School children are at risk of dairy underconsumption - not overconsumption – so the healthy path forward is to expand nutritional choices for students and parents. It reveals Washington's hubris that bureaucrats believe they should be responsible for such a personal health decision.

Therefore, I urge a yes vote on H. Res. 461 and H.R. 1147.

Now let's discuss the two health care bills: H.R. 2868, the *Association Health Plans Act*; and H.R. 2813, the *Self-Insurance Protection Act*. We had planned to consider H.R. 824, the *Telehealth Benefit Expansion for Workers Act* but will be instead considering it at some point in the future.

Each of the health care bills under consideration today addresses a common theme: affordability. Every job creator who offers health coverage to their workers has asked this question for years now: How do we lower health care costs for working Americans and their families?

In fact, we heard this earlier in the year during a HELP Subcommittee hearing. Expert testimony revealed that health care affordability is a decades-long concern for small businesses. Each year, the National Federation of Independent Business takes a poll of its small business members to determine their biggest concerns. For at least 32 straight years, the "Cost of Health Insurance" has topped their list.

Thirty-two years is a long time.

So, when our charge on this Committee is to respond to health care concerns for

working Americans, I take it to heart when surveys reflect their prolonged discontent. I imagine there are two possible reasons for this. One, we are too slow to legislate. Two, we are too hasty to regulate.

A major factor in health care price inflation is overregulation and overreach from our federal government. It's no coincidence that in the areas where government is most involved, like education and health care, prices have risen the fastest.

Therefore, I'm proud of the two health care bills under consideration today which cut red tape to deliver lower health care prices.

The *Association Health Plans Act*, H.R. 2868, would bring American families, workers, and job creators much-needed relief.

AHPs have untapped potential to unleash incredible savings – with some evidence of these plans saving workers up to 50 percent on health insurance.

This bill lowers costs by allowing small businesses to pool their resources together, therefore leveling the playing field between small and larger businesses. With more bargaining power, they can compete with larger economies of scale for better premium options.

The final health care bill the Committee is marking up today is the *Self-Insurance Protection Act*. When the ACA passed, some experts predicted that premiums would go up and self-insurance would become an enticing option for larger companies and even low-risk smaller ones. Boy were they right.

To make self-insurance viable, smaller companies need access to a specific insurance known as stop-loss. Stop-loss insurance protects them against catastrophic health claims that they would otherwise be unable to afford. But, government regulators endanger access to stop-loss insurance by threatening to redefine it and overregulating it.

I think each of these bills is a win for the American people. If every member today votes for these proposals, they can return to their home districts and go to their local small businesses and say, "Hey look. This is what I'm doing to claw back 32 years of health care price inflation for you."

That's a message I wholeheartedly endorse, and I know Committee Republicans are

likewise committed to fighting for lower health care costs. Therefore, I urge a yes vote on H.R. 2868 and H.R. 2813.